

On the Docket

Jan. Feb. March, 2001

Volume 3, Issue 1

The Inner Workings: News and Advice

By: Susan M. Thurston, Clerk of Court

Kristen E. Batty,

Happy Year 2001! With a new Presidential Administration now in place, and two Bankruptcy reform bills re-introduced from the last Congress, the year ahead promises to be anything but routine. We at the U.S. Bankruptcy Court are closely watching the proposed legislation and what it may mean to the operations of the court and the administration of the bankruptcy system. On Monday, January 30, 2001, Senator Charles Grassley from Iowa introduced Senate bill 220, which bill is identical to the final conference report approved last year by the Senate and House of Representatives but pocket-vetoed by President

Clinton. The following day, January 31, 2001, Representative George Gekas of Pennsylvania also introduced legislation for bankruptcy reform entitled the "Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act of 2001", H.R. 333. Both bills are receiving fast track treatment, although on February 8, 2001, Senator Paul Wellstone corresponded with Senator Trent Lott, Majority Leader, questioning his purported effort to push the legislation through Congress without opportunity for substantive amendment.

According to statements made by Rep. Gekas before the House, the gist of the legislation is that certain provisions

will be put into place which will make certain that those people who have an ability to repay some of their debts will be compelled to do so, so that instead of a Chapter 7 filing, which will give that automatic almost fresh start, we will be able to shepherd some of the debtors into Chapter 13 and propose a plan and adopt a plan by which they could over a period of time repay some of the debt out of their then current earnings.® Testimony of Rep. Gekas, January 31, 2001.

In all likelihood, the proposed changes would require a major revision of the current bankruptcy schedules and forms, lo-

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Team Coach

By: Lucinda Cory, Courtroom Deputy

PLEASE DEPOSIT YOUR BUSINESS CARD IN THE COURTROOM!

As we have discussed in previous issues, the Bankruptcy Court now uses a digital electronic court recording system in the courtroom. Our new ECRO Operator is Dana Fernandes, who also maintains a partial workload as a Case Manager. Dana is currently in the process of populating the ECRO database with current

In order to obtain current and accurate attorney information — please deposit your business card in the courtroom!

and accurate attorney information (which data is separate from the Court's case management database) to allow the court proceedings to run more efficiently. In order to assist Dana with this effort, we are requesting any attorney who appears before the Court to deposit his/her business card in the bowl located on the Law Clerk/Courtroom Deputy desk (just in front of the judge's bench). *This needs to be done only once.* By having this information, Dana will be able to create an accurate attorney roll database for the recording system, which she can then immediately access whenever coun-

sel appear in court. In addition, by compiling an accurate attorney roll database, the process of requesting and preparing transcripts of hearings will also be more efficient and reliable. Thank you for assisting us in this important effort!

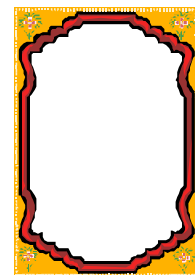
DO YOUR SCHEDULES OF CREDITORS MATCH THE MAILING MATRIX?

Whenever schedules containing creditor names and addresses are filed after the initial petition and mailing matrix, pursuant to Local Bankruptcy Rule 1002-1(3), it is the responsibility of the debtor to ensure that all addresses set forth on the matrix are accurate and complete, and that they conform to the addresses set forth on the schedules.® To ensure that creditors appearing on the debtor's schedules receive notice of the bankruptcy, the Clerk's Office compares the debtor's schedules with the creditor matrix. Unfortunately, in a surprising number of cases there are inconsistencies between the schedules and matrix, which result in the issuance of defective pleading notice requiring the filing of a motion to amend the matrix

pursuant to LBR 1009-1(d), and a \$20 filing fee. We strongly urge attorneys that file schedules of creditors *after* the initial petition to carefully check to ensure that the subsequently filed schedules match the previously filed matrix.

THANK YOU FOR REMEMBERING NOT TO STAPLE ORIGINALS AND FOR PUTTING CAPTION INFORMATION ON THE SIGNATURE PAGE!

The Clerk's office is thrilled to praise the practicing Bar for the many original pleadings now being routinely filed unstapled, and for including case names, numbers and pleading titles on signature pages. Keep up the great work -- it is very much appreciated and allows us to docket your filings more expeditiously! Thank you!



*"Mirror image"
Make sure your schedules
match your matrix.*

Bankruptcy Panel Trustees Speak

By: Lucinda Cory, Courtroom Deputy

As a continuation from the last Issue of *On The Docket* which spotlighted Louis Gernia and Avram Cohen, this issue features Arnold Blasbalg.

Mr. Blasbalg began serving as Trustee in February of 1982 and continued through to September of 1997 when after a long and successful career, he retired.

His fifteen years as Bankruptcy Trustee, Mr. Blasbalg states, remains an important part of his legal career. Being a Trustee allowed him to provide a service to the Court by using his knowledge of the law and his business experience to return as much as possible in assets to the creditors of each and every debtor.

It wasn't easy for Mr. Blasbalg to choose only one or two memorable and noteworthy cases to write about, because so many of them were unique.

However, the *Johnson case, d.b.a. Johnson's Boat Yard* and the *Pacific Enterprises, Ltd.* case were interesting because

they dealt with very unusual circumstances.

In the boatyard case, the Trustee was responsible for repairing and returning over one hundred boats which had been left in storage for the winter to their owners. With the help of Bob Resnick of Max Pollock and Company, the repair work in progress was completed; the vessels were returned to their owners; and the storage and repair bills were issued and collected. Trustee Blasbalg was so successful that this case was closed without one complaint being filed. Trustee Blasbalg now had the expertise of running a boatyard to his credit (something he probably never expected to do).

The second case, *Pacific Enterprises, Ltd., d.b.a. Pacific Gems* was interesting for totally different reasons. With this case, Trustee Blasbalg found himself in possession of several perfect diamonds and hundreds of thousands of dollars in gold chains. Since the true value of these items was determined by

their degree of perfection, much time was spent by the Trustee and potential buyers studying them under a microscope inside the bank vault where they were stored. After everyone had examined the gold and jewels to their satisfaction, the Bankruptcy Court became the site of an auction, which brought in over five hundred thousand dollars for the creditors of that estate.

While these cases were not the biggest that Trustee Blasbalg handled, they were two of his most interesting and out-of-the-ordinary, and we

"Perfect diamonds and hundreds of thousands of dollars in gold chains."

thank him for sharing his memories with us.

Intake Input

By: Jody Venuti

In order to make your visit to the Clerk's Office fast and resourceful, please remember the following "tips" for filing:

***Please conform** legal size paper to standard 8 1/2 x 11. We are not able to image legal size paper.

***Do not staple original** documents, but do staple the copies.

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Public Service Recognition Week

Public Employees Roundtable PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Adam Bratton
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Washington, DC 20013

Public Service Recognition Week 2001 Announced

For Immediate Release: WASHINGTON, DC[February 16, 2001]The 17th annual Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW) will be held May 7-13, 2001. The theme for this PSRW 2001 is "Public Employees: Working for America". During the national celebration of PSRW, festivals, open houses, parades, community clean-up days, and fund-raising event to benefit charity are just some of the ways that public employees around the country plan to reach out to their communities. Awards ceremonies, essay contests, tours, and other activities in some 1,400 U.S. cities will

give the public a closer view of the work performed by government employees. The event, co-sponsored by the Public Employees Roundtable and the President's Interagency Council on Administrative Management has received recognition from the President, members of Congress, and officials from all levels of state and local government.

The National Mall Event in Washington, DC is an excellent example of the type of PSRW celebration that will occur nationwide. During the Mall Event, over 100 government agencies will mount exhibits celebrating the innovation and quality of work performed by public employees. Marching bands, jazz combos and barbershop quartets will entertain the crowds. Kids can meet Smokey the Bear, climb aboard and F-16, and take home free buttons, coloring posters, maps and puzzles.

Since 1982, the Public Employees Roundtable (PER), a group of over 30 management and professional organizations representing more than one million public employees and retirees, has been educating citizens about the quality people in government and the value of



the services they provide. PER also works to promote excellence in government, and public service careers through its scholarship program.

For more information about Public Service Recognition Week or the Public Employees Roundtable visit the PER website at <http://>

Events of the Rhode Island Federal Community

By: Kristen E. Batty, Administrative Specialist

On **May 7, 2001**, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Rhode Island Federal Employees will celebrate the 29th annual "Federal Employee of the Year" Program at the Rhode Island State House. Awards will be given to federal employees for the following categories: Professional, Technical, Government Reinvention Effort, Humanitarian, Law Enforcement, Trade/Craft/Wage Grade, Clerical, Secretary, and Bud Gifford



Leadership.

On **May 10, 2001** the Federal Executive Council of Rhode Island is hosting a PawSox Baseball Game fundraiser at McCoy Stadium. Tickets are \$5.00 per person. If you're interested in attending, please call Kristen at (401) 528-4477 ext. 33.

Come join us and support the federal community.



Tentatively scheduled for **May 8, 2001**, from 9:30am – 2:00pm agencies at the Federal Center will be setting up informational tables for question/answer periods for the public. Refreshments will be served too. Do you have questions for the IRS, Social Security, Secret Service, VA, Bankruptcy, etc. come visit the Federal Center on May 8, 2001.



(Intake Input Cont. from page 3)

*Case name, case number and chapter should appear on signature page of every pleading filed with the court. LBR 1005(a).

*The following fees have increased effective 2/1/2001:

Certification \$7.00,
Search of Records \$20.00,
Tape duplications \$20.00,
Misc Petitions \$30.00, and
Returned checks \$35.00.

*An intended filing related to a matter on for hearing

that day **SHALL BE FILED** in open court and not with the Clerks Office or in the overnight box. See, LBR 1005(e)

*Matrices are now **REQUIRED** to be filed on computer disk. Matrices not filed on disk will be rejected and an order to show cause will be issued, granting a 48 hour compliance time. See, LBR 1002-1(d)(1).

*If **Motions to Amend to Add/Modify/Delete Creditors** are filed, they must include a supplemental diskette containing only the names and addresses of the added creditors. See, LBR 1009-1(d)(3).

*Also, if you filed your matrix on disk you can **retrieve it from our office**. Feel free to browse through the basket of disks in the public area to collect yours.

*As always, thank you for your cooperation.



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cal rule changes and procedural changes in the supervision and administration of cases. Moreover, at present the proposed legislation would also require mandatory credit counseling, financial management courses, greater data collection, expanded involvement of the Office of the U.S.



Two Bankruptcy reform bills re-introduced from the last Congress

Trustee, and a change to the current bankruptcy appeal practice. Changes of this magnitude have not occurred since the enactment of the Bankruptcy Code in 1978, and coupled with the judiciary's national roll out of a new case management / electronic filing system, would be tremendously

challenging for the public and court alike! We will do our best to keep you apprized of breaking legislative and judicial developments in this area. Please also remember to visit our Website for new information and recent court changes / improvements. Happy New Year to all B it may prove to be a most historical one at that.

ANSWERS TO LAST QUARTER'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

5. www.ribscourts.gov

7. Votolato disk

9. Thurston

16. Firstmeeting

18. Errata

20. Complaint

Down

1. Discharge

2. Proof of claim

3. Pro hac vice

8. Appeal

10. Memorandum

11. plan

17. referees

19.

